

U.S. RISKS LOSING COMPETITIVE EDGE TO OTHER NATIONS IN A PROMISING AREA OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

The United States has long been the world leader in scientific innovation and investment in new areas of medicine. With embryonic stem cell research rapidly emerging as a field with enormous potential, the U.S. risks taking a back seat to other nations that have recognized the importance of the research and have made a strong commitment to supporting and encouraging the work. One top stem cell scientist (Roger Pederson) has already left the U.S. to set up a laboratory in the United Kingdom, which has a more favorable research environment. In addition, a growing number of countries allow and even fund the creation of embryonic stem cell lines through somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT).

EMBRYONIC STEM CELLS

IN 2003, THE EUROPEAN UNION DECIDED TO ALLOW FUNDING FOR EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH REGARDLESS OF THE DATE THAT THE STEM CELLS WERE DERIVED. This means EU funding could be applied to any embryonic stem cell line. The policy contrasts with current U.S. policy, which requires that stem cells had to be derived by August 9, 2001, to qualify for federal funding—an arbitrary cutoff date.

MANY COUNTRIES ARE ACTIVELY PURSUING EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH AND HAVE PROVIDED SIGNIFICANT GOVERNMENT FUNDING TO SUPPORT IT:

Australia	Finland	Japan	Sweden
Canada	France	Singapore	United Kingdom

IN ALL, AT LEAST 30 COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE NOW ALLOW GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR NEW EMBRYONIC STEM CELL LINES TO BE DERIVED FROM EXCESS EMBRYOS IN FERTILITY CLINICS, REGARDLESS OF THE DATE THE LINES WERE CREATED .¹

Australia	France	Japan	South Korea
Belgium	Greece	Latvia	Spain
Canada	Hong Kong	The Netherlands	Sweden
China	Hungary	New Zealand	Switzerland
Czech Republic	Iceland	Russia	Taiwan
Denmark	India	Singapore	United Kingdom
Estonia	Iran	Slovenia	
Finland	Israel	South Africa	

NUCLEAR TRANSFER

A GROWING NUMBER OF COUNTRIES PERMIT THE USE OF SOMATIC CELLULAR NUCLEAR TRANSFER (SCNT) TO PRODUCE STEM CELLS.²

Belgium	Israel	South Korea
China	Japan	Sweden
India	Singapore	United Kingdom

¹ Walters, LeRoy, National Academy of Sciences, October 12, 2004 <http://dels.nas.edu/bls/stemcells/Walters.pdf>

² Ibid